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Message Text

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65
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 EB-07 INR-07 LAB-04 NSAE-00

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB, SA
SUBJECT: EXPATRIATE WORKMEN IN SAUDI ARABIA WITHOUT CONTRACTS

1. THE SAUDI ECONOMIC SURVEY, A WEEKLY ENGLISH-LANGUAGE DIGEST OF ECONOMIC NEWS IN SAUDI ARABIA, REPORTS IN ITS AUGUST 4 EDITION THAT THE MINISTRY OF LABOR AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS HAS URGED EMPLOYERS AND WORKMEN TO ADHERE TO SAG LABOR LAWS WITH PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ON THE NECESSITY OF CONCLUDING CONTRACTS.

2. THE SURVEY REPORTS THAT "THESE CONTRACTS... ARE PRIMARILY INTENDED TO SERVE THE INTEREST OF EMPLOYERS AND WORKMEN TO STABILIZE THEIR RELATIONS AND TO PUT AN END TO THE COMPLAINTS BY EMPLOYERS CAUSED BY THE SUDDEN DESERTION OF WORKMEN OF THEIR JOBS TO JOIN OTHER COMPANIES AND ESTABLISHMENTS FOR HIGHER PAY."

3. THE SURVEY ADDS THAT "...THE MINISTRY REQUESTS EMPLOYERS AND WORKMEN TO OBSERVE THESE RULES IN ORDER TO AVOID THE FINE... WHICH MAY REACH SR10,000 AND THE DEPORTATION OF THE EXPATRIATE WORKMEN.".

4. COMMENTS: AN INCREASING NUMBER OF EXPATRIATE WORKERS - AMERICANS INCLUDED - ARE TAKING WORK IN THE KINGDOM
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WITHOUT ESTABLISHING A CONTRACTUAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE

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EMPLOYER. THE EMPLOYEE FEELS THAT THIS "PROTECTS" HIM IF THE WORK OR WORKING ENVIRONMENT PROVES UNACCEPTABLE, AND HE WANTS AN EARLY OUT. THE EMPLOYER FEELS THIS PROVIDES HIM WITH THE FREEDOM TO RELEASE WORKERS WITHOUT PRIOR NOTIFICATION.

5. THE REALITY, OF COURSE, IS THAT NEITHER ARE PROTECTED. THE EMBASSY HAS BEEN VISITED BY A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF DISAFFECTED AMERICANS WHO COMPLAIN THEY ARE NOT RECEIVING WHAT WAS PROMISED THEM. WHEN IT IS DISCOVERED THAT THEY HAVE NO WRITTEN CONTRACT, THEY HAVE LITTLE RECOURSE.

6. ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COIN, A NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES (U.S. NATIONALS) HAVE VISITED WITH EMBOFFS TO SOLICIT NAMES OF POTENTIAL EMPLOYERS. THEY ARE UNHAPPY WITH THEIR CURRENT WORK, AND KNOW THEY ARE FREE TO GO ELSE-WHERE SINCE THEY HAVE NO CONTRACT.

7. THE FLUIDITY OF THE LABOR SITUATION, COUPLED WITH THE SERIOUS LACK OF SKILLED AND SEMI-SKILLED MANPOWER, TRANSLATES INTO A CHAOTIC LABOR MARKET. EXPATRIATES ARE COMMANDING EVER INCREASING WAGES, BUT FREQUENTLY FIND THEMSELVES WITH NOTHING MORE THAN AN EXIT VISA. PORTER

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